

REMARKS

This amendment is in response to the Official Action dated July 19, 2004. Claims 1, 4, 6-8 and 10-16 have been cancelled, Claims 2, 3, 5 and 9 have been amended and new Claims 17-22 have been added. The application now includes Claims 2, 3, 5, 9 and 17-22 with Claims 17 and 18 being the only independent claims. Favorable reconsideration, in view of the above amendments and accompanying remarks, is respectfully requested.

In paragraphs 2-4 of the Official Action, the Examiner has rejected Claim 3 under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, for the reasons discussed therein. As discussed above, Claim 3 has been amended. It is believed that the amendments to Claim 3 overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112.

In paragraph 9 of the Official Action, the Examiner has indicated that Claims 5 and 8 contain allowable subject matter if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. New Claim 18 corresponds to Claim 5, which has been cancelled, rewritten in independent form. Thus, it is believed that Claim 18, along with dependent Claims 19-22 are patentable over the cited references. With regard to Claim 8, literally rewriting Claim 8 in independent form to include the limitations of intervening Claims 6 and 7 did not make for an easily readable claim. Thus, new Claim 17 is essentially Claim 8, which has been cancelled, rewritten in independent form including the limitations of intervening Claims 6 and 7, which also have been cancelled. Accordingly, it is believed that Claim 17, along with dependent Claims 2, 3, 5 and 9 are patentable over the cited references.

In paragraph 6 of the Official Action, the Examiner has rejected Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 13-16 under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,176,352 to Maron et al. As discussed above, Claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11 and 13-16 have been cancelled and Claims 2 and 9 now depend from Claim 17, which as discussed above, is believed to be patentable over the cited references.

In paragraph 8 of the Official Action, the Examiner has rejected Claim 12 under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maron et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,217,131 to Schanzenbach. As discussed above, Claim 12 has been cancelled.

In view of the above amendments and accompanying remarks, it is believed that the application is in condition for allowance. However, if the Examiner does not believe that the above amendments to the claims place the application in condition for allowance, the undersigned attorney respectfully requests a telephone conference with the Examiner to discuss the application and the prior art references prior to the issuance of a final action by the Examiner.